Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in this application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended)

A method for fabricating a functional dental element, wherein ~~a three-dimensional printing technique is used and wherein~~ layers of a suitable material are successively applied onto each other by a three-dimensional printing technique, wherein each layer is bonded at desired positions to a preceding layer thereby allowing the removal of excess, non-adhering material, wherein the element obtained is subjected to a sintering step, and the sintered element ~~the element~~ is subjected to infiltration by a second phase.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended)

A method according to claim 1, wherein ~~the infiltration~~ the sintering step is preceded by a debinding step ~~and/or a sintering step~~.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended)

A method according to claim 1, wherein the shape and dimensions of the dental element are measured in a patient ~~while~~ using an optical scan technique~~, preferably a laser technique~~.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended)

A method according to claim ~~3~~ 21, wherein the laser technique yields data about shape and dimensions in electronic form.

Claim 5 (Cancelled)

Claim 6 (Currently Amended)

A method according to claim ~~5~~ 1, wherein the suitable material is a powder and wherein the bonding between the layers is realized by means of a binder.

Claim 7 (Original)

A method according to claim 6, wherein a computer is used for controlling, on the basis of the data obtained upon measuring, a print head which applies the binder to specific, desired positions.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended)

A method according to claim 6, wherein the binder is selected from the group consisting of colloidal silica, polyvinyl acetate (PVA), starch adhesives, acrylates, polyvinyl alcohol, polyethylene oxide (PEO), ethylenevinyl acetate (EVA) and derivatives thereof.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended)

A method according to claim 6, wherein the powder is ~~selected from the group of ceramic materials~~ a ceramic material, ~~such as SiO_2, Al_2O_3, K_2O, Na_2O, CaO, Ba_2O, CrO_2, TiO_2, BaO, CeO_2, La_2O_3, MgO, ZnO, Li_2O and combinations thereof, and metals, such as alloys of gold, platinum, palladium, nickel, chromium, iron, aluminum, molybdenum, beryllium, copper, magnesium, cobalt and tin,~~ a metal, ~~and combinations~~ or a combination of metals and ceramic materials.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented)

A method according to claim 6, whercin the layers are applied with a doctor blade.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented)

A method according to claim 6, wherein the powder is applied in dispersed form.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended)

A method according to claim 11, wherein in a layer, the powder comprises powders of a different nature ~~are used~~.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended)

A method according to claim 12, wherein in a layer, the powder comprises powders of a different color ~~are used~~.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented)

A method according to claim 11, wherein at least one layer differs in composition from the others.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented)

A method according to claim 12, wherein the powder is locally applied with a computer-controlled nozzle.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented)

A method according to claim 12, wherein at least one of the powders has an average particle size less than 50 nm.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented)

A method according to claim 1, wherein the dental element is sintered at a temperature of 400-800 °C for a period between 10 minutes and 3 hours.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended)

A method according to claim ~~17~~ 1, wherein ~~after sintering an~~ said infiltration is carried out with a glass-ceramic or a polymer ~~is carried out~~ material.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended)

A method according to claim 1, wherein the dental element is ~~additionally~~ further shaped by grinding, filing, polishing, sanding, blasting or treatment with a ball bed.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented)

A dental element obtainable by a method according to claim 1.

Claim 21 (New Claim)

A method according to claim 3, wherein the optical scan technique is a laser technique.

Claim 22 (New Claim)

A method according to claim 9, wherein the ceramic material is selected from the group consisting of SiO_2, Al_2O_3, K_2O, Na_2O, CaO, Ba_2O, CrO_2, TiO_2, BaO, CeO_2, La_2O_3, MgO, ZnO, Li_2O and combinations thereof.

Claim 23 (New Claim)

A method according to claim 9, wherein the metal is selected from the group consisting of alloys of gold, platinum, palladium, nickel, chromium, iron, aluminum, molybdenum, beryllium, copper, magnesium, cobalt and tin and combinations thereof.